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VARIETIES OF ENGLISH, USING THE DICTIONARY--LANGUAGE CURRICULUM I, STUDENT VERSION.

KITZHABER, ALBERT
RQR60230 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, EUGENE

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A STUDY GUIDE WAS PREPARED FOR STUDENT USE IN A SEVENTH-GRADE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT REGIONAL DIALECTS, SOCIAL DIALECTS, AND FUNCTIONAL VARIETIES OF ENGLISH WERE INCLUDED WITH RELATED EXERCISES. THE GUIDE ALSO DESCRIBED A UNIT ON USING THE DICTIONARY. REVIEW MATERIALS WERE INCLUDED FOR EACH OF TWO UNITS COVERED BY THE GUIDE. AN ACCOMPANYING GUIDE WAS PREPARED FOR TEACHERS (ED 010 150). (WN)

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

USING THE DICTIONARY

Language Curriculum I
Student Version

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I. INTRODUCTION

Perhaps you have already noticed that people from other parts of the United States speak differently. When asked what these differences are, you might answer, "Oh, she speaks with a southern accent," or "He has a New York accent." If asked to explain what you mean by the word accent, you might reply that it refers to the funny way the person pronounces certain words. Has anyone ever told you that you had a funny accent?

Another thing that you may have noticed is that some of the people who have lived in your home town all their lives do not speak alike. The speech of educated people--usually those who have attended college or university for several years--is different from the speech of less educated people. Your local minister and school teachers may not talk the same way as your neighbor who works in a sawmill or on a fishing boat. You also may have noticed some of the ways in which their language differs. Sometimes educated people use "bigger" or "harder" words, sometimes they pronounce words in a funny way, and sometimes the way they arrange their words sounds odd to you.

If you are especially alert, you may have noticed that neither educated nor uneducated people talk the same way in all situations. When your neighbor stands up and gives his opinion at a P.T.A. meeting, he does not talk the same way he does when he is joking with your father across the back fence. Likewise, the principal of your school, who sounds very formal when he is talking to a large group of pupils, uses a less formal way of talking when he speaks to you alone in his office. If you were a visitor in this same principal's home, you might discover that the way he talks to his own children is quite different from the way he talked to you. It would be hard for you to explain what these speech differences are, but you are certain that the differences are there.

Finally, you are probably aware that you do not use the same type of language when you write a letter to a friend as you do when you talk to that friend personally. More than likely, you find it more difficult to say what you want to say when you write a letter. Somehow it just doesn't seem possible to write things down the same way as you would say them.

But, you may ask yourself, are the different ways of speaking and writing all "correct," or are certain types "better" than others? Are the speakers of English who come from other parts of the country trying (unsuccessfully) to talk the same as you do? Or do they believe that you speak with a funny accent? Do educated people speak "better" English than uneducated people do? Is the language used by the governor of your state when he speaks on television "better" than the language he uses in his own home? Is written English better than spoken English?

The answers to these questions and other questions just like them are the subject of this unit. Among other things, you will find out a little about (1) regional and social dialects of English, (2) different varieties of Standard English, and (3) ways to find out about "proper" forms. In short, you will discover some important facts about the varieties of American English. Your understanding of the word dialect is a key to answering many of the questions asked in this unit. Perhaps you will be more confident of your

use of language and less likely to ridicule the language of others when you have become aware of the fact that there is not just one "correct" way of saying things. You will have become a more sophisticated student of language.

II. REGIONAL DIALECTS

What is a dialect? Any group of people who talk to each other every day begin to have special ways of talking together. The members of your family use words and expressions which have special meanings that others do not understand. Your group of friends at school use certain slang terms which teachers and parents usually do not understand. Similarly, people who live together in a city or a valley often have special ways of saying things which are different from the language of people living in nearby cities and valleys. The members of any group, large or small, who have certain language habits in common can be called a speech community. These language habits may be special ways of pronouncing words, special names for objects or actions, or special ways of expressing certain ideas. A dialect, then, is a variety of a language used in a single speech community.

Language and dialect. When dialects are so different that a majority of the members of one speech community cannot understand the speech of another community, they may be said to speak different languages. Any language is made up of many dialects. It is possible for you to understand the speech and writing of people who come from all different parts of the United States, even though they do not speak exactly the same as you do. This means that, although they speak a different dialect, they do speak the same language--that is, American English. Americans do not speak the same dialects of English that people speak in England, Australia, or Canada. In each of these countries, English is the language that is spoken, but in each country it is a different dialect of English.

You may remember that Jim in Huck Finn was very much interested in the fact that the French people used a language different from American English, but what Jim did not understand was that he and Huck were using a dialect quite different from the English used in other sections of America. Observant people who have had an opportunity to travel in various sections of the United States have noticed these variations of the language and found them interesting. They have asked such questions as "What causes these variations?" "How did they come about?" "How long did it take?" People who are interested in language and how it develops and changes are called linguists.

You may possibly have met a linguist if you know some university professors. Or you may have met Mr. Higgins, a linguist in George Bernard Shaw's play, Pygmalion. If you did not meet him there, perhaps you met him in My Fair Lady, the musical comedy based on Shaw's play. Mr. Higgins actually earned his living by helping millionaires change their own speech so that they would be accepted in high society.

Let's look in on the opening scene of Pygmalion. The scene is a summer night in London, and a sudden shower has made people take shelter. Someone in the group notices that Mr. Higgins is taking down what they say in a

notebook. They are suspicious of him until he explains to them he can tell where people live by the way they speak. He tells several people what part of London they come from, though he has never seen them before. They are astonished and impressed, thinking he is performing some kind of magic act.

After most of the people leave, a gentleman asks Higgins how he does it. Higgins explains that his secret is "simply phonetics." He says that the average person can tell an Irish brogue, but he can tell exactly where a man lives by the way he talks. Mr. Higgins brags that he can "place any man within six miles" or "within two miles in London" and "sometimes within two streets."

Though you may not be able to guess "within two streets" where someone lives by the way he talks, let us see how much of Mr. Higgin's magic ability you do have. Have you ever said, "You must come from the South," to someone you had just met, who might have said no more than "Good mawnin', you-all"? Do you have any idea where someone might come from if he pronounced "Cuba" as "Cuber" or "idea" as "idear"? Can members of your class think of any particular expressions or pronunciations that come from a particular part of the United States? Does everyone in your class use exactly the same expressions? Do you all pronounce words the same way?

When certain Englishmen came over to the North American continent in the 1620's and '30's, they naturally brought with them the language they had spoken at home. But new surroundings, conditions, inventions, as well as mixing with other people, changed their version of English. British corn (general word for "grain," as in the Corn Laws of 1832) has come to mean a specific grain, "maize"; mad (insane) similarly has come to mean "angry"; shop was replaced by store whose older meaning had been more like "warehouse" (fashionable shoppe is back in); lumber (articles in disorder) has narrowed to "timber." The many dialects spoken by the early settlers soon became mixed together to form American dialects. As the colonies spread westward, the new American dialects were brought into new regions and mixed with the dialects of settlers from other colonies on the east coast. The pioneers borrowed words from the languages of other people who lived in the region: the American Indians, the French, the Spanish, and the Dutch. Large cities grew, and the speech of these cities often changed the speech of people who lived in the surrounding country. Even the languages of later settlers had their effects upon American English. The regional dialects of American English are the result of many different influences.

Regional dialects are most easily noticed on the eastern coast of America, the place where they were formed. The three main dialects found there are Northern, Midland, and Southern. As these dialects were spread across the length and breadth of the continent, they became mixed with one another. For example, the speech of the people living on the Pacific Coast shows a complex mixture of speech from all three major dialects. Washington and Northern Idaho residents show preferences for Northern dialect, whereas residents of Oregon and Southern Idaho and parts of Eastern Washington show preferences for Midland speech. The Scandinavian and German immigrants of later settlements may also have had some effect upon the speech of the Northwest.

Dialects in literature. American writers have often used regional speech in their stories and books. You might remember the way Huck, Tom and Jim speak in Mark Twain's books, Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. Mark Twain tried to illustrate the Mississippi Valley dialects of the 1850's. Perhaps your teacher will read you some examples of American regional dialects found in literature.

Don't misunderstand the meaning of dialect as you listen to examples from books and stories. For the most part, only the speech of the uneducated is shown by irregular spellings. The speech of educated people is given in regular spelling, even though the character might speak a dialect which is different from yours or the writer's. The dialect of uneducated people is often used by the writer for the sake of humor. The point is that dialect does not refer only to the speech of the uneducated. Everyone, educated and uneducated Americans alike, speaks a dialect of American English.

Exercise 1. The following expressions are found in the speech of educated Americans living in various parts of the United States. Mark those expressions which you use in talking with your friends.

I want for you to take it.
I want you to take it.

I want to talk to you. (Both used in talking to a group)
I want to talk to you-all.

He felt sick to his stomach.
He felt sick at his stomach.
He felt sick in his stomach.

The boy dove into the water.
The boy dived into the water.

Those children were not raised properly.
Those children were not brought up properly.
Those children were not reared properly.

I waked up early this morning.
I awakened early this morning.
I woke up early this morning.
I wakened early this morning.

He lives on Jackson Street.
He lives in Jackson Street.

We stood in line.
We stood on line.

It is quarter till eleven.
It is quarter of eleven.
It is quarter to eleven.

I sweated all afternoon yesterday.
I sweat all afternoon yesterday.

What conclusion about regional dialects can you draw from the above exercise? Your teacher will help you find out which expressions are most common in your own region.

Exercise 2. The following sets of words are used by educated people living in various parts of the United States. The words in each set refer to the same object or thing. Mark those words which you use in talking with your friends.

pail	faucet	stoop
bucket	spicket	porch
	spigot	
swill	corn meal pudding	brook
garbage	hasty pudding	run
slop	mush	branch
		creek
clapboards	andirons	lightwood
weatherboards	fire dogs	fat pine
weatherboarding	dog irons	fatwood
siding		kindling
angleworm	pancake	dragon fly
earthworm	fritter	darning needle
rainworm	hotcake	snake feeder
fishworm	flannel cake	mosquito hawk
dew worm	batter cake	snake doctor
mud worm		
johnnycake	cottage cheese	cherry pit
corn bread	curds	cherry seed
corn pone	Dutch cheese	cherry stone
	clabber cheese	

What other conclusion can you make about regional dialects after doing the above exercise? Your teacher will help you discover which words are preferred in your region.

Exercise 3. The following exercise contains pronunciations which are used by educated people living in various parts of the United States. Mark those pronunciations which you use in talking with friends.

greasy -- with an s sound, as in say
greasy -- with a z sound, as in freeze

can't -- with the sound of a, as in father
can't -- with the sound of ai, as in paint
can't -- with the sound of a, as in cat

creek -- with the sound of i, as in bit
creek -- with the sound of ee, as in sheep

path -- with the sound of a, as in father
path -- with the sound of a, as in cat

barn -- with the sound of a in father, and approximately the r in rat
barn -- with the sound of a in father, but no r sound

either -- with the sound of e, as in he
either -- with the sound of i, as in bite

ate -- with the sound of a, as in paint
ate -- with the sound of e, as in pet

catch -- with the sound of ɛ, as in cat
catch -- with the sound of e, as in fetch

Your teacher will help you decide which pronunciations are most common in your region. In what three ways do regional dialects differ from each other? Do the leaders of our state and country use only one regional dialect? Is any one dialect considered the best?

III. SOCIAL LEVELS OR DIALECTS

You have found that everyone in America speaks a dialect of American English. Both educated and uneducated alike use words, pronunciations, and expressions which identify them as speakers of one regional dialect or another. But you have probably noticed that educated and uneducated people in your neighborhood do not speak exactly alike. The speech habits of the educated or the uneducated can be called dialects, also, since the circumstances fit the definition for dialect given on page 2 of this unit. The educated people form a speech community, just as the people in your home town or your region of the country form a speech community. A person can be a member of several speech communities at the same time. The educated people have certain language habits in common, and the same can be said of those who have had less education. We call such levels of language social dialects. They have been produced by social forces, especially education.

Social dialects are different from each other in the same ways that regional dialects differ: pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Your teacher may choose to read to you some examples of social dialects in literature. For example, Huck Finn, an uneducated boy, speaks to Mary Jane Wilks, a daughter of educated parents, in Chapter 28 of Huckleberry Finn. The differences between Mary Jane's speech and Huck's speech are very obvious. For example, Huck says things like "took up," "nobody don't," and "they ain't going to get no money." Mary Jane, on the other hand, says "They sha'n't touch a hair of your head" and "I won't do so any more."

Do not confuse social dialects with regional dialects. Perhaps the following discussion will help you keep the distinction clearly in mind. In

America, no single regional dialect has become the model for all speakers. In England, however, it is the dialect of the educated Londoner which is considered "the best." But the President of the United States may continue to use his regional dialect in all situations. The late President John F. Kennedy always spoke the dialect of Boston, which contrasts sharply with the dialect of the Southwest spoken by President Lyndon B. Johnson. But you should notice that our Presidents, as well as other national and state leaders, all use the particular dialect spoken and written by the educated people within their own regions. In other words, the Standard English of Americans will vary somewhat from region to region. The English spoken and written by educated people in New York City will not be identical with that of California or Alabama. Standard American English is by definition the dialect spoken by educated Americans, regardless of the region in which they live.

Perhaps the following exercise will help you understand what is meant by social dialects. Remember this: regional dialects are mainly the result of where a person lives; social dialects are mostly a result of how much schooling a person has had. One of the most important things you will ever learn in school is to write and speak the dialect of educated people in your community.

Exercise 4, Standard English. The following list contains expressions which are found in the speech of the educated, and other expressions which are found only in the speech of the uneducated. After those expressions which you think educated people would use in conversation, write the word standard. After those expressions which you believe only an uneducated person would use, write the word substandard.

I feel quite spry today.
Jack isn't to home today.
You-uns better quit that.
Who did you see on the bus?
They ain't gonna give up.
That boy has been dogbit.
He fell outn the bed.
Bob dove into the water.
The garbage pail stank.
The wind blowed it down.
He had to wait till I came.
Leave me be!
His clothes fitted well.
He behaves pretty well.
It's me, your neighbor.
I dreamt last night.
I might could get it for you.
I brung my coat along.
You hadn't ought to do that!

Your teacher will help you correct your list of labels. Which expressions were hardest to label as standard or substandard? Do the substandard expressions get the meaning across as well as the standard forms? Why don't educated people approve of the substandard forms? What happens when you

use a substandard expression, such as "I brung it," in a situation where several educated people are present? Why are only standard forms and expressions taught in school? Your teacher will help you arrive at satisfactory answers to the above questions.

IV. FUNCTIONAL VARIETIES OF STANDARD ENGLISH

You may also have noticed that both educated and uneducated people change their style of speech in different situations. For example, compare the way you talk to your brother or sister at home with the way you talk when answering a question in class. You use certain pronunciations, words, and expressions in your own home that you do not use in the classroom. It is not likely that you would speak to a stranger in the same way you speak to your parents. Similarly, your father changes his way of talking when he speaks to a large group of people. Under these conditions, his language is quite different from the language he uses at the breakfast table. These different ways of talking are <u>not</u> referred to as dialects. You should think of them as different styles of language within your dialect of American English. Perhaps you are already very clever at changing your style of speech to fit particular situations.

One problem which comes up in schoolwork is that you very often try to write your language in the same way that you speak it informally. This is perfectly all right when you are writing a story and want to show how people are actually talking. But when you are writing reports or themes, another style of English is needed. When your teacher crosses out certain words on your papers, he simply wants you to use words that are more appropriate to written English. The teacher knows that you say "wanna," but you must write "want to." You also need to use different styles of writing for different writing tasks. When writing a letter to a friend, you do not use the same words and expressions that you would use in a report for a history class. One of your biggest jobs is to learn to choose those words and expressions which are just right for the situation. You have to decide what kind of language your audience expects, and then you must use that style in the best way you can.

<u>Standard</u>, as used in this unit is a label used to indicate that a word or expression is used by educated Americans in some type of speech or writing. <u>Substandard</u>, on the other hand, is a label which means that an expression is not used by educated people in America. It is important to notice that some forms of standard English are acceptable in speech but usually not in writing.

<u>Spoken standard English.</u> Educated speakers of English use different styles of speech in different situations. These differences in style may be seen in the choice of certain words, in the use of certain expressions, and even in the pronunciation of words. When you are in a very <u>formal</u> situation (for example, giving a talk before a large group), you change your style in several ways. You avoid slang expressions known only to you and your close friends, you avoid certain contractions (shortened forms), and you try to pronounce your words in the way you have heard educated people pronounce them. An example of a formal speech follows:

(For example of a formal speech by President John F. Kennedy, see The New York Times Western Edition, November 19, 1963, p. 2 from an address to the Inter-American Press Association beginning "And it is on the Alliance for Progress...." and ending "...fruits of progress.")

But when you are in a very informal situation (for example, talking to your best friend), you use a very different style of speech. You often use slang terms which have special meaning for only you two, you use contractions freely, and you use expressions and pronunciations that you probably never would use among strangers. An example of informal conversation follows:

(For example of an informal conversation, see Walter Van Tilburg Clark's The Ox-Bow Incident, New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1960, p. 27, beginning "He didn't use his fist,...." and ending "...and gave him the sack.")

Between the two extremes illustrated above, you have many styles which are suited for other situations. An educated person is likely to have many more speaking styles than an uneducated one, since the educated person will probably need to change his speech to fit a greater number of social situations. One of the things you should learn in school is to change your speaking and writing styles so that your use of language will be acceptable in whatever situation you face. One style of English will not do for all situations. The following exercise will help you see how speech changes with the situation.

Exercise 5. Styles of Spoken English. Arrange the following sets of expressions in descending order, from formal to informal. That is, place

the ones you would use in formal situations above those you would use in more informal ones. Then, if you wish, after each expression write the number (or numbers) of the situation (or situations) in which you would use them. The situations are as follows: (1) in an interview on television, (2) in an oral report in class, (3) in a conversation with a teacher, (4) in a conversation with a fellow student who is not a close friend, (5) in a normal conversation at home, or (6) none of these.

I don't have any.
I haven't any.
I have none.
I haven't got any.

Who'd you speak to?
Who'd you talk to?
To whom did you speak?
Who did you speak to?

I don't feel well.
I am not well.
I'm sick.
I feel badly.
I feel bad.

Thanks for the invitation.
Thank you for the invitation.
Thanks for the invite.
I thank you for the invitation.

Can I help you?
C'n I help you?
May I help you?

Aren't I?
Ain't I?
Am I not?

Your teacher will help you decide upon the most appropriate order. You and your classmates may disagree on the arrangement of the expressions which are neither very formal nor very informal. Should the expressions used in informal situations be called "bad" English? Are any of the speaking styles you use considered the "best" one? Which of the expressions are often considered substandard English? For example, some persons would never use the expression "Ain't I" in any situation, formal or informal.

Written standard English. Educated writers of English do not use the same style of writing in all situations. A written report for a class assignment calls for a different style of English from the one you would use in a letter to a friend. Very informal styles of writing are much like spoken English. For example, rather short sentences, contractions, and even slang or colloquial terms are used in very informal writing.

The kind of writing that you find in newspapers and magazines and in

the personal letters of educated people can be called informal Standard English. For example, the sports page of a nationally-known newspaper carried the following quotation:

> (For quotation, see Ed Rumill's "Alston Sparks L. A. Consistency," from The Christian Science Monitor, July 21, 1965, p. 7, beginning "Through weekend action...." and ending "...jewel of consistency.")

Another kind of written English, which might well be called "general English," seems to stand halfway between the informal writing quoted above and the more formal writing of many serious essays and books. Here is an example of general English taken from a handbook of English usage:

> (For example, see Porter G. Perrin and George H. Smith's Handbook of Current English, published by Scott, Forsman and Co., Chicago, 1955, p. 20, beginning "Good judgment in choice of the appropriate...." and ending "...more likely to be Formal.")

Formal writing avoids the use of contractions, slang expressions, and vocabulary which are characteristic of speech. Formal writing contains longer, more complex sentences, and the ideas are arranged in a more orderly fashion. Formal written English is the language style used in some textbooks. An example of formal writing follows:

> (For example of formal writing, see Helge Kökeritz' Shakespeare's Pronunciation, published by Yale University Press, New Haven, 1953, p. 4, beginning "When Shakespeare was lured to seek...." and ending "...making his way in the world.")

Exercise 6. Styles of Written English. Arrange the following sets of expressions in descending order, from formal to informal. Then, if you wish, after each item write the number (or numbers) of the situation (or situations) in which you would use it. The situations are as follows: (1) in an essay dealing with a serious subject, (2) in an article written for the school paper, (3) in a letter to a friend in another city, (4) in a note to a brother or sister, or (5) none of these.

I've got no use for it.
I've no use for it.
I have no use for it.
Got no use for it.

I've got a date with him.
I have a date with him.
I have an appointment with him.
I've been dating him.

I don't know whom I'll vote for.
I don't know who I'll vote for.
I have not decided for whom I shall cast my ballot.

Politics is one subject about which people are curious.
Politics is one thing people are curious about.

That is really a thriller.
That is a real thriller.
That is a real adventure.
That is real thrilling.

The reason he is late is because he got lost.
The reason he is late is that he became lost.

He went a little way down the road.
He went a little ways down the road.

Why are some of the above expressions not used in formal written English? Should the expressions used only in informal written English be labeled "bad" English? Remember that it is the writer's job to choose those expressions which are most appropriate to his subject, his readers, and his purpose for writing.

V. REVIEW

In this unit you discover that there are several kinds of American English. You learn that the word dialect is used to identify the language habits of a single group of people. You find that there are three main regional dialects in the United States: Northern, Midland, and Southern. In the western states, these dialects are very often mixed together.

Another important idea in this unit is that within any regional dialect you can find language differences brought about by education. Some words, pronunciations, and expressions are used only by people who have had very little schooling. Other language habits are found only in the speech and writing of people who have had several years of education beyond high school. These two levels of language are called social dialects. The language of the educated people is the one taught in schools, and it is called standard English. The language used by uneducated people is called substandard English, and it is quite appropriate for use in situations where the other speakers use the same dialect.

Finally, you find that within standard English (or substandard English) there are several different styles of speaking and writing. These different styles range from those which are very formal to those which are very informal. The words and expressions used in spoken English are very often not acceptable in written English, but they are equally "correct" when used in appropriate situations. In conclusion, you learn that your job as a writer or speaker is to choose the most appropriate words and expressions to fit your subject, your audience, and your purpose.

VI. RELATED ASSIGNMENTS

You and your classmates should be alert to the possibilities for observing examples of both regional and social dialects in your home, your neighborhood, in school, and on television and radio. Perhaps one of your classmates comes from a different region of the United States and can explain how his language habits are different from those of your own region. Perhaps you can find a play which contains some kind of dialect; it might be fun to dramatize part of it in class.

Your teacher may wish to have you attempt one or more assignments which are related to your study of regional and social dialects. In trying to apply your knowledge to a new assignment, you will probably find out how well you have studied this unit.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS:

1. How do you think various languages (dialects) may have developed?

2. What makes language change and new dialects develop?
   a. How did new conditions and geography make changes in the language spoken by Englishmen who came here to settle after the year 1607? How did new inventions change the language?

   b. How did immigration from Europe help change American English into a different variety of English? Does an educated American sound the same as an educated Englishman? Is the Englishman's English "better"?

3. Which of the regional dialects in America is rated the highest socially?

4. Do you think the differences in the spoken language in various sections of our country are likely to increase or decrease in your lifetime? Give reasons for your answer.

5. What do we mean by the term standard English? What advantage does this English have over dialects used in certain regions or by small groups within a community?

6. What are the chief differences between speaking and writing? To what extent do we use a different style of language in each? Think of some examples of these differences.

7. What is the difference between formal language and informal language? Does this difference occur only in "standard" English? Does it occur only in writing? or only in speech?

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Lesson One

You are about to do a number of assignments that are intended to serve as an orientation to your dictionary. Orientation may not mean much to you. Open your dictionary and find a meaning for the word which you feel will fit your lesson today. It is likely that you will find a definition like this: "the process of being oriented," or "the act of orienting." Obviously, you still don't know much about the meaning of orientation. You will either have to read on for another meaning or turn back to the root word orient and find the meaning there. If you have done this, you are now partially oriented, because you have found your way in a small section of the dictionary.

Have you ever been told by a teacher to look up a list of words, and have you jumped at the first meaning given or made a mistake in pronouncing the word, only to receive a poor grade or a big laugh? Maybe this was because you had never really gotten your bearings in the dictionary.

Every dictionary has a personality of its own. The publishers do not design their dictionaries exactly alike. It is helpful to have several different dictionaries available so that you can compare them to see how the publishers handle their material. Let's take proper names, for example. Some include all of them right along with other words in the main part of the dictionary, while others use special sections, usually at the back, for geographical names and places and for biographical names.

Now look in your dictionary to see where your publisher lists these words: Australia Mt. Hood Francis Bacon

All dictionaries will have a table of contents. Did you look for one in yours to see if there was a geographical and a biographical section before you looked for the words in the main part of the dictionary? If you did, you are a thinker!

Some dictionaries have a time-saving device in the form of a thumb index to indicate where to find the words beginning with a, b, c, etc. The index may also use abbreviations such as "Biog" (Biographical Names) and "Gaz" (Gazetteer) to indicate the location of the special sections.

Now continue looking at your dictionaries and list 10 statements about the sections or the information you can find; for example, "Vocabulary entries are in alphabetical order and are printed in bold-faced type" or "The _____ Company's dictionary has a section in the back called a Gazetteer which gives geographical names."

After you have completed your lists, you may share them with the class. As the lists are read, you may add to your list any facts which you

have overlooked and which apply to your dictionary. Perhaps you will work in groups with each group using a different publisher's dictionary.

Lesson Two

When you look up a word, you are confronted by a number of abbreviations which may be confusing. After the bold-faced entry, the phonetic spelling is given to show how to pronounce the word. Then you will see a small italic letter with a period--n., v., or some similar symbol. This gives the part of speech (noun, verb, etc.). Some dictionaries next give a series of words and abbreviations, some of them probably in italics and all inside brackets. This shows the etymology or origin of the word. The abbreviations indicate from what language or languages the word came. In some dictionaries the etymology is given after the meanings. To understand the abbreviations you will have to consult the list of abbreviations or the etymology key. Check your table of contents for its location.

You may also see the abbreviation pl. after the preliminary entries. This, of course, stands for plural and is given before the plurals of nouns which are irregular--that is, they form their plurals in some other way than by adding s or es. You may also find a list of verb forms if the main entry is a verb and forms its tenses irregularly, that is, in some other way than by adding d or ed.

Exercises

1. Most dictionaries list abbreviations with the main entries. Use either the key or the alphabetical list of entries to explain:

E.	OF	Sp.	Skt. (or Skr.)	Gr. (or Gk.)
v.	fem.	masc.	n.	Ital (or It.)
adj.	var.	v. t.	pl.	p. part.

2. Look up these verbs and give their tense forms. (Remember, if they are regular, tense forms will not be given.)

sit fly walk drink pay

3. Using your dictionary, give the plural spellings of these words:

sister-in-law house mouse ox fish

Lesson Three

Dictionaries formerly listed foreign words and phrases in a separate section at the back. Perhaps you can find an old edition at home that does so. Now it is becoming common for such words to be included in the main section in their proper alphabetical order. There are several ways

of indicating that they are from a foreign language. Some dictionaries use two parallel bars before the word to show that, while the word is frequently used in English speech and writing, it is still not completely an English word. Some dictionaries use italics to indicate a foreign word. Others give the entry, its pronunciation, and then print the name of the language from which it comes in italics just before the definition.

Exercises

1. To see how your dictionary indicates foreign words, look up these four words, and give their pronunciations and definitions:
hors d'oeuvre kamerod coup d'etat faux pas

2. Look up the entries headed bon and see how many words you can find that come directly from the French but are now so commonly used that they are no longer marked to indicate a foreign word.

3. Do you suppose we are absorbing more or fewer foreign words into our language? Give reasons for your answer.

Several dictionaries have a section called "New Words" or "Addenda," usually in the front. However, there seems to be a tendency for the newer editions to list new words in the main section.

Exercises

1. Use your dictionary to find the meaning of hedgehop and tell where it was listed.

2. Now look up these new words, giving the meanings and telling how they are listed: reactor transistor radar satellite

3. Do you know of any words which used to be slang and are now accepted? Why do you think these words become a part of standard English?

Lesson Four

Have you ever realized that the dictionary is a sort of capsule encyclopedia? It contains a wealth of material that you might never think of looking for in a dictionary. You may use it to discover the meaning of terms from fields as widely separated as cooking and mythology, music and engineering, medicine and fortune-telling, etc. You may find diagrams, tables of money, weights, and measures, and illustrations of everything from an abacus to a zither.

Below are some questions over a wide range of subjects which can be answered by using almost any standard dictionary. After you have found your answers, you might like to work out some questions of your own for your classmates to answer. You might like to work in groups and choose categories, such as mythology, music, biography, agriculture,

etc., from which to draw your questions.

Exercises

1. What is the Eternal City?

2. What would you do if your received this instruction: "Cut a piece of cloth 12 inches long on the bias"?

3. What was Bifrost?

4. Someone calls your best friend an extrovert. Is it safe to associate with her any more?

5. How many countries use the dollar as a monetary unit?

6. Why was Cassandra unhappy?

7. If someone calls you a "Mrs. Malaprop" what have you probably done?

8. How many drams in an ounce?

9. Would you hire Medea for a baby sitter? Why or why not?

10. Some dictionaries include a list of common English given names. If you look up the name Sylvester you will find it means "of the woods." Robert means "bright in fame." Laurie is a form of Lawrence from an ancient Roman city's name.

A look at this section of the dictionary shows that a popular newspaper column might be headed "Dear Joy," and its rival might as well be called "Dear Grace." Can you guess why?

If you can secure a dictionary with a given-names section, check to see if your own names are listed and what they mean.

Summary Exercises

Now that you have completed the orientation part of your dictionary work, you may do the exercises below as a review and summary lesson.

1. What guide words are given at the top of page 123 of the dictionary you have?

2. What do guide words indicate?

3. On a page headed by the guide words secrete-sedition, which words from this list would be included:

sedate	seething	sedimentary	secret service	
savant	secrecy	severe	seldom	sensitive

4. Look up these two words and give the guide words that appear on the page where these words are found:
zenith pedagogue

5. Was Franz Josef Haydn younger than Wolfgang Mozart?

6. How old was Napoleon when he died?

7. Where is the Bay of Bengal?

8. Is there a section of new words in your dictionary? If there is, look up two of them and give their definitions.

9. On what page is the pronunciation key?

10. Give a page on which an illustration may be found.

11. For what do these abbreviations stand:
lat. edit. A. B. A. M.

If your dictionary has no special section for abbreviations, where did you find the meanings of these?

12. Arrange these five words in alphabetical order:
subsidiary subsidy subsidiarily subsistence subsidization

13. How are syllable divisions indicated in your dictionary? Using your dictionary's method of showing the divisions, indicate the syllables for these words:
grammaticality reticent geocentric
typewriter individual

Lesson Five

One part of pronunciation that we must study is syllable-division. You are probably quite well-skilled in dividing words into syllables from the spelling and reading training you have had. Do you remember these basic rules for dividing words into syllables:

1. Every syllable has one vowel sound or one speech sound. (Some endings such as dle, sle, cle, etc., do not have a conventional vowel sound, but do count as syllables.

2. Syllables usually divide between two consonants occurring together, double or not, as win-dow, tab-let, val-ley.

3. Prefixes and suffixes are syllables--un, ex, less, ist.

Exercises

1. Divide these words by the above rules and then check with your dictionary: character convention enrollment
bundle recent drizzle icicle uncoordinated

2. It is likely that you can divide nonsense words in a sensible fashion and could then pronounce them.
Try: snickersnee brillig borogoves
frumious bandersnatch

Accent is another important part of English pronunciation. Accent is ordinarily indicated in dictionaries by marks that look like apostrophes and appear after the accented syllable.

Many words have one heavily accented syllable and one more lightly accented. In this case the heavy accent is indicated by a darker mark than the lightly stressed one, as in mul′ti pli ca′tion.

One easy way to improve your pronunciation is to remember that the English language tends to favor one heavily accented syllable per word, while other vowels are passed over more lightly.

Exercise

1. Using the accent marking system followed by your dictionary, look up and indicate the accents for these words:
interrupt spectacle execution intuition unconventional

Lesson Six

Every dictionary gives a guide to pronunciation in the front or the back. In addition, keys to the pronun ciation system are often printed at the bottom of the pages all through the dictionary so that you can quickly find out how any of the words on a particular page are pronounced, without either having to memorize the key or turn to another part of the dictionary to find it. Check your dictionary for the pronunciation key. It is very important.

The symbols in the key represent only one sound each. The marks above the letters are called diacritical markings. You don't need to learn thenames of all these marks or memorize what they mean, since not all dictionaries use them to mean the same things. But you do need to learn how to use them in finding the pronunciation of words.

Suppose, for example, you want to know how to pronounce "rogue." Your dictionary may put "(rōg)" right after the word. Then you look at the key to find an o with a line over it as in "rōg"; you may find it in "ōver." This simply means that the o in "rogue" is pronounced like the o in "over" and of course you see that the -ue is not sounded at all.

Or take "synonym" as another example. You may find it rewritten as "(sĭn′ə nim)." In your key, ĭ is like the i in "if," and ə is like the a in "alone."

Perhaps you want to know how to pronounce "python." You find it rewritten as "(pī′ thŏn, -- thən." This means that there are two ways of pronouncing the name of this snake. Your key will show you that ī is like the i in "ice," and ŏ is like the o in "hot." In the other pronunciation, you already know that ə is like a in "alone."

Exercise

1. Look up and practice pronouncing these words:
   piano governor theater orchestra poem
   interesting athletic library immediately
   Des Moines Beethoven

Lesson Seven

Have you ever tried to look up a word in the dictionary and failed because you didn't know how to spell it? This frequently happens because the English language has so many spellings that do not seem to agree with the way the words sound.

Some dictionaries give charts of the common spellings of English, usually at the front of the book. These can help you to see some of the letter combinations which give trouble. Such a list will show that the sound of ou may be spelled as in house or bough or now, and that sh may be ocean, she, sure, tissue, creation, tension, conscience, pshaw, special, machine, or fuchsia.

If you do not have available a list of the common English spellings, perhaps your class could work out such a list on a chart and keep it on display. Or you could keep such a chart in your notebook.

Homonyms are words which sound alike but are spelled differently. English has a great many of these, like ewe-you, doe-dough, pear-pare-pair, etc. See if you can think of ten sets of homonyms and write them down.

Your list of homonyms will help to show you the many sound and letter combinations which present problems when you are looking for words in the dictionary. Probably you are most concerned with the beginning sounds and spellings when using the dictionary. (Can you explain why?) Your list of homonyms may have shown you several letter combinations that are common at the beginning of words, such as n and kn, r and wr, wh and h, f and ph, and so on. In addition, you may have found many other combinations which sound alike but are spelled differently, such as ai and ea, oe and ough, ite and ight, etc.

Lesson Eight

Dictionaries are probably used most frequently for the meanings of words. Often people who know all the mechanics of the dictionary and can locate words very quickly, still have a good deal of trouble digging out the proper meaning. Sometimes they are in a hurry and snatch at the first entry or the first meaning given. This haste can result in some foolish and embarrassing mistakes in using words.

Have you heard about homographs? Homographs are words with exactly the same spelling and often with the same pronunciation, but with different meanings and origins. There will be separate entries for these words since they really are different although they look alike on the surface.

Dictionary editors number these homographs to remind the users to look at the other entries if the first one is not the right one. These numbers are usually slightly raised and may be either at the right or left of the bold-faced entry. Most dictionaries list homographs in historical order, which means that the earliest meanings are given first, and the most recent ones last.

Since each homograph may have several definitions, you must be careful to choose a meaning which makes your sentence say what it is intended to say. Don't choose an adjective meaning when the word you are looking up is a noun or a verb.

Exercises

1. Look up these words and note the homographs listed for each:
   rung see share stake reel saw angle

2. Look up these words and tell the total of the numbered meanings for each main entry:
   do pass fall get leg bill high

3. Give a noun meaning and a verb meaning for each of these words and then use each in a sentence, indicating which part of speech you are using: coat sugar drive load love

4. Give an adjective meaning and a noun meaning for each of the following words and then use them in sentences, labeling each as to part of speech used: iron sport paper ocean wool

Lesson Nine

In addition to looking up words to see how they are defined, you may also use the dictionary to add spice to your writing. Synonyms are a magic ingredient, and finding them seems simple enough. However, the wrong synonym can spoil the flavor of your writing, so choose with care.

Suppose you had written this:

"Sheer terror had gripped the island ever since the revolution. Now the dictator and his gang were firmly established and ruled by sheer force."

As you read this over, you notice that you have repeated the word sheer, so you flip your dictionary pages to the entry sheer and find listed as synonyms: unadulterated, pure, absolute, and utter.

Unadulterated sounds impressive but let's see if it is expressive of your meaning. A look at the dictionary shows you that unadulterated is listed after the prefix un, but no meaning is given. You know that you should turn to the root word, adulterate, and you find that this means to "lower the quality by adding inferior material." The synonym debased is also given. You decide to forget about unadulterated because it doesn't quite fit, and you check on the other synonyms for sheer. You finally decide to say that the dictator and his gang ruled with absolute force. You have learned an important lesson if the synonym does not fit smoothly and express exactly the meaning you intend, it is not the synonym to use, no matter how impressive it may sound.

Exercises

Find synonyms to fit these sentences and rewrite the sentences, substituting the synonym for the underlined word.

1. He had no particular news.

2. He was stingy in his dealings.

3. He lives in a frugal manner.

4. The appearance of the old house forebodes danger.

5. Fate was determining the man's future.

6. Sue sauntered to her friend's house.
Were you careful to make your synonyms in the same verb form as the underlined words. Did you add ing, ed, s when needed?

7. See your dictionary to help you find 10 words to indicate ways of walking. (Hint: See sentence no. 6, above.)

8. List five verbs which show ways of making a loud noise.

9. Find five adjectives for swell (that is, ones expressing approval).

10. List four nouns for girl.

11. List six verbs which could be substituted for run and three for ran.

12. List eight adjectives you could use instead of cute, which is overworked and usually not very meaningful.